

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the first-degree amendment, No. 4388, as now amended.

Mr. WARNER. I urge adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 4388), as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE 220TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR NATION'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, in earlier days of my Senate career, I recall that prior to the Independence Day break, Senators would comment on that great and forthcoming historic day. Seeing no Senator who seeks recognition at this time, I shall take advantage of the opportunity to do a little reminiscing in contemplation of the forthcoming 220th anniversary of our own Nation's birthday.

In a few days, this fair city will throw its annual birthday party. Truly, the Independence Day celebration here in the Nation's Capital, is like nowhere else in the country. It is larger, louder, and features a fireworks display to amaze and delight even the most jaded of watchers.

And I think we all have become jaded. We have gotten away from the old-fashioned patriotism that marked our July 4 holidays of yesteryear. In the national capital, Independence Day really should be a show stopper—a sight and sound extravaganza fit for TV viewing.

While not many things are fit for TV viewing—I should not say it that way—I should say TV viewing is not fit anymore, except on certain occasions, but this is an event that is, indeed, fit for TV viewing.

But, in all honesty, I must admit that it is not my cup of tea. No, I prefer to recall a simpler time and smaller celebrations back in the hills and hollows, and the rural towns of my native West Virginia.

The high school band would don its very best regalia, shine up its buttons and march down the dusty small streets lined with moms and dads, children perched atop shoulders so that they could see and point fingers as the parade went by. The baton twirlers would twirl their batons and step high.

Young boys and girls would run along-side just to be part of the spec-

tacle. Meanwhile, the ice cream cones would drip, drip in the sultry heat, seemingly keeping time with the marchers as they proudly passed by.

Somewhere nearby, perhaps inside a church, cakes, pies, fried chicken, potato salad, cole slaw, baked beans and hot barbecue, and a cold Coca-Cola awaited all who felt inclined to take part in the holiday feast.

And those were the days, Mr. President, when a Coca-Cola really tasted—really tasted—unique, and had an unforgettable flavor. Coca-Cola's today do not taste like they did, like a 5-cent bottle of Coca-Cola did back in the days of my boyhood.

And in the evening, a fireworks display, lasting all of 15 minutes, perhaps 20, and boasting at least three different colors in the night sky would captivate all who could stand in a nearby field or climb the lower branches of a not-too-distant tree.

There was pride and happiness on every face, then respectful silence when the stars and stripes was hoisted high and we all thanked God that we were free.

The stars and stripes fluttering in the breeze. There is just nothing like it. I contemplate those ancient Fourth of July.

I am confident that in the many small towns in my home State and in many other States, the Fourth of July celebration is still much like those that I remember—a joyful, yet thoughtful reflection on our blessed freedoms.

And in the midst of all the small-town hoopla, in these communities, the traditional customs and values which have been the fabric of American society over these 220 years are still preserved and revered.

In this vast, vast Nation which has come to be so dissimilar from one coast to another, and with an economy so diverse that interests seem always to be at war for some kind of advantage, nothing is needed more than are reminders of our common bonds and traditions.

This Nation is an ongoing experiment in making one out of many—"e pluribus unum," as our coins proclaim. Our intricate constitutional system of government tries to combine diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, competing economic interests, and dissimilar geographic areas into some semblance of manageable commonality, while also attempting to guarantee individual freedoms without undermining the rule of law. Meanwhile, our all too distracted citizens are preoccupied with raising a family, earning a living, and coping daily with the increasing complexity of ordinary life. At times we seem less like a cohesive Nation and more like a collection of continually warring tribes.

Often, especially in this city, there is so much political sniping, so much game-playing, so much negativity and criticism that it seems as if the focus is always on what is wrong with America or what is faulty about our system.

So we all need to stop and contemplate and think and remember on that day, the Fourth of July, and ponder the miracle of Philadelphia: the republic—not the democracy—the Republic of the United States.

Anymore it is only on such special days that we cease the constant barrage of criticism and together appreciate the sweet air of our freedom. Would any of us really choose to live elsewhere? I think not.

On this coming Independence Day, I hope we pause and think about the things that unite us as a people, rather than about the things that seem to divide us. Perhaps also on that day we can spend some time with children and grandchildren, turn off—turn off—the TV sets, turn them off, and hopefully leave them off and actually talk with one another. Maybe some can even find time to go stand on the sidewalk, view that small, local parade, the kind they have in Kentucky and West Virginia, and, just for a moment, be completely swept away by the sight of our glorious flag as it goes by.

Hats off!

Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
A flash of color beneath the sky:

Hats off!

The flag is passing by!

Blue and crimson and white it shines,
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.

Hats off!

The colors before us fly;
But more than the flag is passing by:

Sea-fights and land-fights, grim and great,
Fought to make and to save the State;
Weary marches, sinking ships;
Cheers of victory on dying lips:

Days of plenty and years of peace;
March of a strong land's swift increase;
Equal justice, right and law,
Stately honor and reverend awe;

Sign of a nation great and strong
To ward her people from foreign wrong:
Pride and glory and honor,—all
Live in the colors to stand or fall.

Hats off!

Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums;
And loyal hearts are beating high:

Hats off!

The flag is passing by!

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

The Senate continued with consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 4420

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I am happy to say the objection to the Conrad amendment has been removed. I had spoken with Senator CONRAD. I do